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THE "LITTLE ENTENTE," ITS GENESIS AND ITS AIMS

By GORDON GORDON-SMITH *

(NOTE.—Some may question the advisability of discussing, in the columns of a publication devoted to the advancement of peace, the genesis and aims of a combination like the "Little Entente," as it is a purely political, military, and economic one. My contention is, however, that the only *raison d'être* of the "Little Entente" is to help to secure and maintain peace and, if necessary, impose it. It can only thrive and prosper in a peaceful Europe. Its military power (and this is very great) could never be devoted to a policy of aggression and despoilment without the men who have called it into being proving false to all their professions and principles. "Defense, not defiance," is its motto, and the furtherance of the cause of peace its guiding spirit.—G. G.-S.)

PRINCE METTERNICH, the Austrian Chancellor, speaking of Italy before its unity was achieved, once said: "Italy is not a country; it is merely a geographical expression." The irony of fate willed it that this sarcastic utterance should become true of his own country. That empire was not a country in the strict acceptance of the word; it was a dynasty, an army, and a bureaucracy. This combination under one head, the House of Hapsburg, held together for centuries a conglomeration of five different races—Germans, Magyars, Slavs, Italians, and Rumanians—representing nearly a score of nationalities and as many languages. Nothing but a diabolical skill and cleverness held together, ever since the Middle Ages, these disparate elements. It could not be described as statesmanship, for true statesmen would never have created or kept in existence that pyramid on its apex, the Dual Monarchy. In the last fifty years, however, there were ever-increasing centrifugal forces at work, tending towards a disruption of the existing order of things in Austria. This was chiefly the result of the undue preponderance of the German and Magyar elements, which formed a total of less than eighteen million out of a population of nearly fifty millions. We thus had the anomaly of a German-Magyar minority ruling a Slav majority. And not only was this majority deprived of its rightful place in the body politic, but it was oppressed and held down in every possible way by the ruling German and Magyar races.

Early in the present century a strong movement began, the object of which was to transform the Dual Monarchy into a Tri-al one, in which the Slav element would be given its proper place and influence. Such a movement was undoubtedly the outward expression of a more enlightened statesmanship, and if it had been carried to its legitimate and logical conclusion it might have spared us the horrors of the World War. The movement was, however, resisted, tooth and nail, by the reactionaries of Vienna and Budapest.

But there was yet another quarter in which it was viewed with the deepest suspicion and disfavor, and this was in Berlin. The German Empire saw that if once the Slav elements in Austria-Hungary were given their

full political rights and influence a radical change in the policy of the Dual Monarchy was unavoidable. The Slav influence would inevitably have brought about a new orientation in the foreign policy of the empire, one tending to closer and more friendly relations with Russia and a corresponding diminution of German power and influence. Berlin saw the danger and for quarter of a century threw its whole weight into the scale against any concessions to the Slav element. In this it was powerfully aided by the reactionary parties, both in Austria and Hungary, until little by little Germany's influence became paramount and the Ballplatz ended by taking its orders in matters of foreign policy, almost without question, from the Wilhelmstrasse.

Bit by bit the scheme of an empire of "Mittel Europa" began to take form and substance. To realize this dream of the German Emperor, his rule would have had to extend clear down the center of Europe, from the Baltic to the Persian Gulf. Holding the Cattagat and the Dardanelles, both the Baltic and the Black Sea would have become German lakes, Russia would have been completely cut off from all direct communication with the rest of Europe, and from being the most easterly of European nations would have become the most westerly of Asiatic ones. She would, slowly but surely, have been pushed back into Asia, while the German Empire, transformed into "Mittel Europa," would have dominated the rest of Europe, the first step toward world dominion.

To realize this grandiose scheme Germany, in addition to controlling Austria, would have had to dominate the Balkan Peninsula and the Ottoman Empire. The foundations of German power in the Balkans were accordingly laid with care. Carl von Hohenzollern, a member of the reigning House of Germany, was placed on the throne of Rumania, Prince Ferdinand of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha was made Prince, and later King, of Bulgaria. German influence in Greece was assured by the Kaiser giving his sister Sophie in marriage to the Crown Prince Constantine. On the occasion of this marriage the Kaiser, after the wedding at Athens, pushed on to Constantinople, where he laid the foundations of the German-Turkish Alliance, which was destined to play such an important rôle in the World War. General von der Goltz and a large staff of German officers were sent to Constantinople to reorganize the army, while the navy was put in charge of Liman von Sander. The army was completely rearmed with Krupp guns and German-made rifles, its whole organization was passed in review, and its drill and efficiency brought up to date on Prussian lines.

But the greatest and most important part of the creation of this huge Empire of "Mittel Europa," with its 200,000,000 inhabitants, was the construction of an immense railway line, which was to form the backbone of the whole system, the famous Berlin-Bagdad line. From this vertebral column branch lines would radiate right and left, forming a huge skeleton, which German skill and efficiency would clothe with blood and muscle by the development of trade and commerce.

It was this grandiose scheme which threatened the peace of the world and finally plunged it into the most tremendous armed conflict humanity has ever seen. For this, Germany today stands at the bar of history. The fact that she constituted the brains and the driving

* Mr. Gordon-Smith brings to bear in his treatment of conditions in the east of Europe the fruits of keen observation in that area. So difficult is it for the American to understand the currents that flow through the conflicts of the region that we believe his painstaking work is a high service.—THE EDITOR.

power of this immense scheme for world dominion causes many people to overlook the guilt of her partners and accomplices—Austria, Bulgaria, and the Ottoman Empire. People did not realize previous to and during the World War that Austria was just as guilty as her German ally. In fact, in some ways she was more guilty, as the scheme of "Mittel Europa" would not have been possible and would never have been conceived if it had not been for her oppression and misrule of the subject races, crushed by the tyranny of the Austrians and the Magyars. This was so little understood by many of the Allied statesmen that they failed to see that until the Austrian Empire was disrupted and dismembered there could be no real peace in Europe. Austrian statesmen had so long balanced on the political tight-rope that they were credited with being able to continue to do so indefinitely.

A certain school of Italian diplomatists even desired, in the interest of that fetish of European statesmen, the balance of power, the maintenance of Austria as one of the great powers. They wanted, it is true, to inflict defeat upon her, clip her wings and establish Italian superiority, politically and militarily, but they did not desire to see the Austrian Empire disappear entirely. The reason for this was that they feared Russia as much, and even more, than they feared Austria-Hungary. If the Allies should be victorious and Austria should be dismembered, it was certain that the Slav nations—Poles, Czechs, Slovaks, Croats, and Serbs—would declare their independence and form new States in central Europe. A Polish State of thirty millions, a Czechoslovak State of fifteen millions, and a Greater Serbia of fourteen millions would, the Italians thought, be merely outposts of the Russian Empire, the greatest military power in Europe.

By the secret treaty with France and Great Britain, signed before the war, Russia was to be given Constantinople. This meant the opening of the Dardanelles and the appearance of the Russian Black Sea fleet in the Mediterranean. If a Greater Serbia, the protégé and ally of Russia, held the coast of the Adriatic facing Italy, that country felt that any moment its position as one of the leading powers in the Mediterranean might be challenged. It was this fear which caused the Italian Government to negotiate and sign the secret Treaty of London in 1915 which has caused so much trouble.

The conception of the Austrian Empire as one of the great powers of Europe was, therefore, so firmly rooted in the minds of certain statesmen that it was a long time before they could reconcile themselves with the idea of its dismemberment. But its existence was such a defiance of all the principles of human justice, and so many centrifugal forces were at work within it, that nothing could save it. Once the war was over, the debacle commenced.

The result was the creation of two new States, Poland and Czechoslovakia, and the aggrandizement, at the expense of Austria and Hungary, of two existing ones, Rumania and Serbia. The new Poland, numerically the most important of what are known as the succession States, was made up of the union of German, Austrian, and Russian Poland. Bohemia broke away from Austria and Slovakia from Hungary and formed the Republic of

Czechoslovakia. Rumania took over Transylvania, the Bukovino, and part of the Banat of Temesvar from Austria, and Hungary recovered the Dobrudja Province, which Bulgaria had seized during the temporary victory of the Central Powers, and added the Russian Rumanian-speaking Province of Bessarabia to her possessions. The Serbian-speaking provinces of Croatia, Dalmatia, Bosnia, Herzegovina, Slavonia, the Batchka, and what was left of the Banat of Temesvar rallied round Serbia and, with the addition of Montenegro, formed the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, popularly known as Yugoslavia.

All that was left of the former Dual Monarchy was Austria proper and that part of Hungary inhabited by the Magyars. These formed two States of about eight million inhabitants each. The laying down of the frontiers of the new States was not altogether an easy matter. There was considerable friction between Poland and Czechoslovakia regarding the mining district of Tetschen. Then there was trouble between Yugoslavia and Rumania regarding the division of the Banat of Temesvar. But the greatest trouble of all was between Yugoslavia and Italy regarding the division of territory on the Adriatic.

As I have already said, Italy, inspired by a fear of Russia, had arranged with France and Great Britain before the war (in fact, it was her price for coming in on the side of the Allies) for obtaining possession of practically the whole of Dalmatia, thus annexing a country inhabited by six hundred thousand Yugoslavs. But Russia, after the revolution, ceased to be a menace as a military power and the Slav danger to Italy was no longer to be feared. But the idea had so long been a bugbear with the Italians that they could not realize that the Russian menace had passed away, and they still insisted on the execution of the secret Treaty of London. In addition, Italy claimed Fiume, in spite of the fact that she had, in the secret treaty, expressly and categorically declared that this was a Croatian and not an Italian port and should be given to Yugoslavia.

The Italo-Yugoslav conflict became at one time so acute that the peace of Europe seemed once more in danger. Fortunately, better counsels prevailed and by the Treaty of Rapallo, signed on November 12, 1920, the secret Treaty of London was practically abrogated and a settlement achieved. By this treaty a compromise was arrived at regarding Fiume. That port was declared an independent State, neither Italian nor Yugoslav. The Italian Government has found considerable difficulty in carrying out the terms of the Treaty of Rapallo on account of the resistance of a certain section of public opinion, which still opposes the Yugoslav State in every way; but, as the Rome cabinet has repeatedly and solemnly declared that it will carry out its pledges, the Belgrade Government has shown the greatest patience and taken no steps likely to embarrass the Italian Government.

As a consequence, there are now no longer any grounds for conflict between the succession States formed from the debris of the shattered Austrian Empire. But, though the causes of conflict with one another were eliminated, they soon found they had other sources of anxiety. This was due to the attitude of two of the

vanquished States, Hungary and Bulgaria. Both of these States, but especially Hungary, showed the utmost hostility to the terms of the peace treaties. The Budapest Government and the Magyar Parliament had, of course, officially ratified the Treaty of Trianon; but it was mere lip service. The Magyar press and public openly declared that the nation repudiated the terms of the peace treaty and would leave no stone unturned to secure its abrogation and revision. In the public park in Budapest marble groups, erected by national subscription, representing the lost provinces, were unveiled amid scenes of popular enthusiasm. On the pedestals inscriptions were carved declaring that the Magyars would never rest until they had regained possession of the lost territory and had again brought the Slovak, Rumanian, and Serbian populations under the Magyar yoke.

The new succession States saw with a certain anxiety that this Magyar propaganda was not without a certain echo in Allied countries. The Magyars took good care to exploit such sympathies as were felt for them in England for all they were worth. The English sentiment towards Hungary is a somewhat curious one and is based on a complete misconception of the real situation in Hungary and the real character of the Magyar leaders. Ever since the time of Louis Kossuth the Magyars were regarded in England as a high-spirited, liberty-loving people. Kossuth was supposed to have raised the standard of revolt against the tyranny of Austrian rule in the name of all the people inhabiting Hungary, and the insurrection of 1849 was supposed to be the act of an oppressed nation struggling to be free. What the British public failed to understand was the Magyar conception of liberty, which is liberty for the Magyars, but for nobody else. Kossuth's program, providing for freedom from Austrian oppression for his fellow-countrymen, made no provision for the liberties of the Croatian, Slovak, Rumanian, and other races inhabiting Hungary in numbers even exceeding the Magyars themselves. It is notorious that when Louis Kossuth came to the United States and was enthusiastically received, the party working for the abolition of slavery in America appealed to him in vain to raise his voice against such shameful conditions as the open buying and selling of human beings as slaves on the territory of the Republic.

In taking this line Kossuth was, however, perfectly logical, as the Magyars have no real conception of the word liberty. For them political liberty means the recognition of the Magyars as a superior race, which must not suffer any oppression, but which has the right to rule all the so-called subject races with a rod of iron, the word "subject races" in this connection meaning simply non-Magyar. But legends, once they are started, are notoriously hard to kill.

The Hungarian insurrection of 1849 was regarded as a great and admirable effort of a liberty-loving people, while the ruthlessness with which it was crushed by the Austrians, aided by the Cossacks of the Czar Nicolas, increased the public sympathy. When the workmen of Bass's brewery took their malt shovels and drove the Austrian Field-Marshal Haynau, the butcher of the Magyar patriots, from the brewery, they only voiced the prevailing British sentiment. The only Magyars with whom the British, as a rule, came in contact were the great land-owners and the representatives of the Magyar

aristocracy. As these are, as a rule, fine sportsmen, fond of dogs, horses, and outdoor life, they were sure of a warm and cordial welcome in England. Such Englishmen as enjoyed the large and generous hospitality of the wealthy and titled "Magnaten" never realized that such fine and open-hearted sportsmen could in racial and political matters behave with ruthless cruelty and injustice towards those whom they regarded as belonging to an inferior race. As a result, Magyar propaganda has found a favorable soil in England, especially among the more wealthy and aristocratic elements—that is to say, the class which has much to do with shaping and influencing British policies. So much was this the case that serious anxiety was aroused among the people, formerly Hungarian subjects, whose new-found liberties would be threatened by any triumph of Magyar aspirations.

A similar danger was seen as the result of Magyar propaganda in France, though in this case the influences at work were of a completely different nature. On the territory of the French Republic the fear was that Austria and Hungary might again gravitate towards Germany. In order to prevent this, certain parties were not averse to buying the good will of the Austrians and the Magyars at the price of concessions which could only be made at the expense of the succession States. This party was strongly clerical in its views and dreamed of exploiting the religious differences in central Europe to the profit of France. They dreamed of getting the Catholic Rhine Province to break away from Protestant Germany and form, under the ægis of France, a separate republic. Then a restoration of the Wittelsbach dynasty was planned in Bavaria, which would, in its turn, declare itself an independent kingdom. Austria would be reached through Bavaria, and Hungary through Austria. We would thus have a reproduction, on a smaller scale, of the "Mittel Europa" scheme, based, this time, on religious and not on political sentiments.

At any other time such a project would have found little support in France; but that country has, in the Near East, accepted mandates over large sections of Asia Minor. But French influence in the Near East has been almost entirely built up by the admirable and tireless work of the French Catholic missionaries. The famous Jesuit college at Beirut is the center of enlightenment in the Near East, and the schools of the various religious orders throughout the Levant and Asia Minor have spread education and civilization all over the Ottoman Empire. If this religious influence was withdrawn or rendered hostile to French policy, the mission of France in the Near East would have been greatly hampered. It was for this reason that the French Government had to take Catholic susceptibilities into account in shaping its policies.

It is, however, extremely doubtful if a policy built on such foundations would have proved successful. Political differences would very soon have strained it to breaking point. The Germans of the Rhine Province and of Bavaria would soon have discovered that they were Germans first and Catholics afterwards, and it would soon have been apparent to the French that they were leaning on a broken reed. But if this party in France had carried its point, much mischief might have been done before the hollowness of such an entente was demonstrated. The succession States saw the danger.

Any attempt to restore the Hapsburg power in Austria and Hungary was a direct menace to their existence and liberties.

Fortunately for them, they possess far-seeing and experienced statesmen, especially Dr. Benes, the Premier and Foreign Minister of the Czechoslovak Republic, who has, further, behind him a man of great talent and experience in the person of Dr. Masaryk, the President of the Republic. Dr. Benes saw that if the Austro-Hungarian danger was to be eliminated a power would have to be created such as would impose itself on Europe and hold Austro-Hungarian schemes in check. He saw salvation in an alliance of the succession States for their mutual protection. He accordingly began to negotiate an offensive and defensive alliance with Yugoslavia. The treaty was signed at Belgrade on August 14, 1920. He then proceeded to Bucharest and laid the foundations of a similar alliance with Rumania, the treaty being signed at Bucharest on April 23, 1921. Rumania then, on June 7, 1921, concluded a similar treaty with Yugoslavia, and the "Little Entente," as it is called, was born.

With their total population of nearly forty million souls, the countries of the "Little Entente" could in a fortnight's time mobilize an army of a million and a half men. Such a force could easily hold in check any force which Austria and Hungary could put in the field. It was not long before the "Little Entente" had an opportunity of demonstrating its power and practical utility. In the month of November of last year Charles of Hapsburg arrived in Hungary by airplane and declared his intention of again mounting the throne. There is little doubt that if the matter had been left to the Magyars he would have succeeded. The political parties in Budapest never made any secret of the fact that they regarded the abolition of the monarchy as merely provisional and that it would be restored at the first opportunity. The title given to the head of the State was alone proof of this. Admiral Horthy took the title of regent. In other words, his government merely replaced, for the time being, the fallen dynasty.

But in all the succession States people knew that the return of Charles of Hapsburg would be more than a mere personal restoration. It would mean the official adoption of all the Magyar aspirations—aspirations which, if fulfilled, would mean an immediate conflict with the succession States and an attempt to restore the *status quo ante bellum*.

The response of the "Little Entente" to this action of Charles and his supporters was immediate and energetic. An ultimatum was at once sent to Budapest, calling upon the government to arrest and deport the ex-king. Any failure to do so, the government of Admiral Horthy was informed, would lead to armed intervention by the "Little Entente." Simultaneously with this ultimatum Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia each mobilized large bodies of troops, ready for instant action. In addition, the Budapest Government was called upon to pass a law excluding the Hapsburgs forever from the throne of Hungary. The success of this energetic action was immediate and complete. The ex-king was arrested, handed over to the Allied Powers, and deported to Madeira.

Meanwhile the relations between Rumania and Yugoslavia had been becoming closer. The agreement on all outstanding questions was now complete. The question of the division of the Banat of Temesvar, which at one time seemed to threaten a grave conflict, was satisfactorily settled. The final touch to the good and close relations of the two kingdoms was given by the betrothal of King Alexander to Princess Marie of Rumania.

But the "Little Entente" was not only a political and military force in international politics; it had also economic possibilities of the first magnitude. In the period immediately succeeding the war, racial hatreds were too great to allow of any economic *rapprochement* between the countries which had been in conflict. These racial animosities found their outward expression in a tendency to erect all kinds of economic barriers against the former enemies. Each State became a kind of economic water-tight compartment within which it attempted to live. Passport regulations, customs duties, segregation of railways, and other measures of a similar kind contributed to isolate the various countries one from another. The victors in the war looked on with a somber satisfaction at the economic difficulties of their defeated enemies and at first believed that their adversaries' loss could be their gain.

It was not long, however, before the more intelligent among the European statesmen saw the fallacy of such a theory. They realized the complete economic interdependence of the various States in modern times. This was specially true of the States which formerly constituted the Austrian Empire. The political existence of that empire had been a defiance of every principle of government, but economically it was very sound and organized on highly intelligent lines. Austria proper, and especially Vienna, with its great universities and other seats of learning, its banking and financial worlds, its highly developed newspaper press, and its army of bureaucrats, highly trained in the art of government, had constituted the brain and the driving force of the empire. The luxury and magnificence of the imperial city, together with the charm and hospitality of its citizens, had made it one of the leading centers of Europe.

The commercial and industrial skill of the Czechs, probably the most intelligent of all the Slavs, has placed Bohemia in the front rank of industrial States. Her glass and textile factories, the great iron works of Skoda, the breweries of Pilsen, and scores of other great industrial enterprises, all contributed to the economic greatness and prosperity of the empire.

In Hungary the wheat belt of the great Danubian plain made that kingdom one of the granaries of the world. The Banat of Temesvar, probably the most fertile country in Europe, was literally a "land flowing with milk and honey." The Danube, one of the most noble rivers in the world, navigable almost from its source to the sea, furnished an unrivaled means of transport and contributed immensely to the economic needs of the empire.

In Poland and Galicia the rich coal mines and oil wells furnished fuel and power for the whole population of the Dual Monarchy. Istria and Dalmatia, with their population of hardy and adventurous mariners, contributed the personnel for the merchant marine and

manned the imperial navy. Trieste, Fiume, Ragusa, Spelato, and the other ports along the Adriatic assured the communication with the outside world. In other words, the Austrian Empire, while politically without a *raison d'être*, what our quondam German enemies would term an *Unding*, was economically highly developed along very sound and intelligent lines. Each province had its specialty which contributed to the general good.

Then came the crash of the World War, the disruption of the Austrian Empire, and the constitution of the succession States from the wreckage. These, as I have said, were at first full of racial hatreds and rancors. The establishing of the new frontiers provided material for endless friction. Czechoslovakia and Poland were in conflict over the mining district of Tetschen, Rumania and Jugoslavia were quarreling over the division of the Banat, Hungary disputed the possession of the Baranya with Jugoslavia and the Burgenland with Austria, while the territorial disputes between Jugoslavia and Italy reached a point of dangerous tension.

The railway situation was absolutely chaotic. At the moment of the armistice each country had simply grabbed all the rolling stock it could secure. Each State bitterly reproached the other with overreaching its neighbors. So acute was the conflict that the international railway service was at a complete standstill. No State would allow its locomotives or wagons to cross on to the territory of its neighbors, as they had no certainty they would ever come back. In many instances they had no means of repairing damage to rolling stock, the repairing shops formerly used being now on foreign territory.

River and canal navigation was in a similar state. Barges and tugs were seized where they lay and appropriated without other form of process. Each country made its own regulations for inland navigation, while customs duties and frontier formalities were so complicated as to practically render international communication impossible. Posts, telegraphs, and telephones suffered from similar conditions. Each component part of the former Austrian Empire found itself handicapped by being deprived of goods formerly contributed by other sections. It was the old story of the belly and the members over again. It was clear that the only salvation lay in a policy of reconstruction. The States formerly composing the Austrian Empire would have to work together again economically or perish.

Dr. Benes then embarked on the second portion of his task, which was practically the economic reconstruction of the Austrian Empire, but with Austria, this time, in the place to which her numerical situation entitled her—that is to say, at the bottom of the ladder instead of at the top. His first care was to lay the foundations of an economic entente with the Yugoslav and the Rumanian Allies. Commercial and industrial experts were appointed by the three countries, who met and discussed their common interests. At these conferences, held at Porta Rosa, Bratislava (the former town of Pressburg), and other centers, steps were taken favoring the resumption of commercial relations.

Dr. Benes saw, however, that if the economic conditions were to be thoroughly re-established the system of alliances would have to be still further extended.

He therefore negotiated an alliance with Poland on similar lines to those concluded with Rumania and Jugoslavia. This added thirty million Poles to the forty million which the "Little Entente" already counted. This treaty was signed at Prague on November 6 last.

Then there still remained Austria. The condition of that country was probably more desperate than that of any other portion of the former empire. A small State of seven and a half millions, with two and a half of these inhabiting the single city of Vienna, was "too heavily engined for its beam." It was impossible for a rural population of less than four millions (for Austria, besides Vienna, counted other large centers) to support such a large urban population. Unless the resources of the States it formerly ruled could be made available, it would die of inanition. The condition of affairs in Vienna were indescribably bad. The value of the currency fell from day to day and its purchasing power threatened to reach vanishing point.

The statesmanlike combination put forward by Dr. Benes, therefore, made a great appeal to the men in charge of Austria's destinies, and on November 16, 1921, at the Castle of Lana, in Bohemia, Dr. Schober, the head of the Austrian Government, signed a treaty with Czechoslovakia on similar lines to those concluded with the other States. The Czechoslovak Premier had, reconstituted, as a working arrangement, the former Austrian Empire. It was in some respects even a more powerful combination, as it included many States which had not formerly been part of Austria, such as German and Russian Poland, Serbia and Montenegro, Rumania, the Dobrudja, and Bessarabia, the total population of the States thus allied reaching the imposing figure of seventy millions. If it could only be knit closely enough together to form economically, politically, and militarily a single *bloc*, it would be the most powerful combination in Europe and would, numerically, rank next to Russia.

The only State formerly a component part of the Austrian Empire left out of the new combination was the Magyar one. This was not due to any innate hostility to that nation (such a sentiment could never be entertained by a statesman of Dr. Benes' breadth of view), but was solely the result of the *intransigence* shown by the Magyar Government. Like the Bourbons, the politicians of Budapest "have learned nothing and forgotten nothing." The great landed proprietors of Hungary could not bring themselves to accept as equals the populations they had so long ruled over and oppressed. In their stiff-necked arrogance they refused to accept the *fait accompli*. What they ultimately hope is far from clear. All that is certain is that they are at all times ready to "fish in troubled waters" and evidently vaguely hope for some fresh upheaval in Europe which will again enable them to impose their will. For the moment, the only thing to be done is to "let them stew in their own juice" till better counsels prevail and they see the folly of their present line of conduct. Thanks to the "Little Entente," they are, militarily, powerless for harm. It may be that, with time, the lesson will sink in and they will end by realizing that there is no longer any use in "kicking against the pricks," and will finally adopt a more reasonable attitude.

I may remark in parenthesis that Yugoslavia, on her other frontier, is faced with a somewhat similar problem in Bulgaria. That country, like Hungary, finds it difficult to accept new conditions and shows no signs of frankly accepting the position which her policy in the World War brought upon her; but she, too, with Yugoslavia and Rumania able and ready to suppress any overt act on her part, is helpless and can only sulk apart, "nursing her wrath to keep it warm." All that can be hoped is that time and steady pressure of economic conditions will bring about a better frame of mind. The Bulgarian problem, as I have said, greatly resembles that present in Hungary, and it is possible that they are, to a certain extent, interdependent, being based on common hatreds and a common refusal to accept the consequences which their policies, both before and during the World War, brought upon them.

I have so far indicated the importance for the various States of this series of alliances. But the combination has yet another aspect, the international one, and the rôle which it plays in the balance of power in Europe. This is hardly less important than the economic one and the part it plays in economic reconstruction.

In order to realize the importance of this rôle, we must consider the political "line up" in Europe today. On the one side we have the Allied Powers—Great Britain, France, and Italy—and on the other their vanquished enemies—Germany, Bulgaria, and Turkey—States which have unwillingly accepted the peace terms imposed upon them by the Paris Peace Conference. Then there is the "X" in the political problem, the position of Russia. Though, like Ishmael, Russia's hand is against every State, she is willing, as a matter of expediency, to accept a combination with any one State or group of States in order to break down the power of the others. She can, however, only hope for efficacious aid from one quarter and that quarter is Germany. If Germany should be allowed or should succeed in undertaking single-handed the reconstruction of the Russian Empire, the Allies may have won the victories, but they will have lost the war. With Russian resources in men and material, organized by German thoroughness and efficiency, Europe would be face to face with a dangerous menace.

The only trump card in the hands of the Allies is that Russia and Germany are geographically separated from one another, and that common action will only be possible when the intervening barriers have been broken down. And what are those barriers? Poland, Czechoslovakia, Rumania, and Yugoslavia. Thus the combination formed by Dr. Benes may prove the salvation of Europe and the last bulwark of civilization. So long as Europe remains united, Germany, threatened on one side by France and Belgium and on the other by Poland and Czechoslovakia, is held completely in check. The only bulwarks against a Russian invasion of western Europe are the States of the "Little Entente" plus Poland.

The chief requisite of the "Little Entente" is a united policy and a common point of view. It was with a view of bringing this about that, as a preliminary to the Conference at Genoa, a meeting of the delegates of Poland, Czechoslovakia, Rumania, and Yugoslavia was held at Belgrade ten days before the Genoa meeting,

to draw up a program of common action. The fact that the delegations of the "Little Entente" at Genoa were headed by the premiers of the respective States—Dr. Benes for Czechoslovakia, M. Nicolas Pashitch for Yugoslavia, and M. Bratiano for Rumania—allowed of their taking prompt decisions. They were not under the necessity of referring every point raised to their home governments, as delegates with less plenary powers might have had to do, but could settle them at once, after consultation together, on the spot. The fact that the delegates of the States included in the Benes combination represented seventy million people gave them a weight and influence in the conference possessed by no other single power.

The success of Dr. Benes's policy in bringing about this combination opens up prospects of yet another efficacious union of small States. This is one composed of what is known as the Baltic States—Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Finland. These States are still in the first stages of national organization and cannot, therefore, throw their whole weight into the scale; but politically and economically they have great possibilities, though, of course, their ultimate destinies are still in doubt. It is not yet certain whether they will permanently enjoy an independent existence or whether they will not, later on, again form part of a free and reorganized Russia. If they were permanently cut off from Russia, that power would be almost entirely landlocked, with hardly any outlets to the sea—a dangerous and perhaps an intolerable position for a nation of nearly 200,000,000 inhabitants; but as long as the Bolshevik menace exists in its present form, the Baltic States have every reason for maintaining their separate existence.

If, then, the Allied Powers can only remain united and maintain a clear and well-defined policy, they still hold all the trump cards. Thanks to the geographical position of the "Little Entente" and the nations allied with it, the strategic position, from a military point of view, is assured. As long as Germany and Russia are unable to establish direct contact with each other and are confined each in its water-tight compartment, any military action on their part is doomed to failure. But one thing we must not forget, and that is that the world is war-weary, and that the nations will only take up arms once more in defense of their very existence and to keep the liberties they have won. They can no longer be shuffled about on the European political chess-board to advance the political schemes of individual statesmen or the selfish ambitions of other States. This is why all decisions taken must be carefully weighed and must be founded on right and justice. The force and power of the new combinations cannot be invoked in support of selfish aims or personal ambitions.

The horrors of the last seven years are too near us for the people of Europe to be again led to butchery for any cause that has not their wholehearted and enthusiastic support. At no epoch in the world's history did such a responsibility lie on the national leaders, and history will call each of them sternly to account for his actions and policy. Any attempt to carry out a policy based on blind hatred and revenge will recoil on the heads of those inspiring it.